



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD CARRIES ON LEGACY 150 YEARS AFTER CIVIL WAR**

*Units from Marion, West Frankfort, Litchfield, Salem, Paris and Galesburg date back to Civil War*

*Story by Spc. Lisa Cope, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

**SPRINGFIELD** – The year 2011 marks the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War. While many aspects of life have changed over the past century and a half, today's Illinois National Guard Soldiers share many similarities their predecessors.

Illinois was one of the biggest contributors of troops during the Civil War, said Adriana Schroeder of Springfield, the historian for the Illinois National Guard. She said due to a high sense of patriotism, Illinois did not have to institute the draft until the fall of 1864, meaning that for the first three and a half years of the war, Illinois had an all-volunteer force like today's military.

"When Illinois Governor Richard Yates called for 6,000 troops from Illinois at the beginning of the war in 1861, he got an estimated 100,000 volunteers," Schroeder said. "Even though the state was authorized to accept some of the extra volunteers, 5,610 of the Soldiers ended up serving under the state of Missouri, as Illinois did not have the funds to support the excess troops."

Illinois citizens were patriotic to the call of their state, said Schroeder.

The Soldiers of the past seem to have similar motivations for joining as today's Soldiers, said Richard Schachtsiek of Springfield, a Civil War re-enactor.

"It was a lot like jury duty today; it was your civic duty to go," said Schachtsiek. "They were going to save the Union. It was patriotism. They were going because all their friends and buddies were going. They were going to see the bigger world."

Lt. Col. Mark K. Whitlock of Springfield, the director of the Illinois State Military Museum, agreed with Schachtsiek. He said today's Illinois National Guard Soldiers have many commonalities with past warfighters.

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## CIVIL WAR 150 2/2/22

He said the Civil War Soldiers from Illinois would go to war because they wanted to protect their home and their loved ones from having a war fought on their soil, in their hometowns.

"Soldiers in the Civil War took to arms to protect what they believe in and to defend it," said Whitlock. "Today's Soldiers are much the same. Even despite combat operations overseas, people are still enlisting into the military knowing very well they may be called to serve in a combat zone."

Whitlock said the Civil War evolved war fighting into what war fighting is today. He said in the wars preceding the Civil War, opposing sides would line up approximately 50 to 100 yards across from each other and fire muskets that could fire only three rounds per minute, without much accuracy.

"Winning in war is based on the technology and the advancements of weapons and tactics," said Whitlock. "The Civil War influenced modern warfare and the military as a whole."

With the invention of newer weapons that could fire more rapidly, and were accurate at distances of up to 300 yards, the lining up of Soldiers became too dangerous and the tactics began to shift towards the trench warfare that would later be seen in World War I.

"They introduced grenades during the Civil War," said Whitlock. "You have mines, you have all kinds of obstacles and things like that, so it is becoming much more of a modern battlefield, and the mentality of the leadership and the tactics had to evolve as well because the weaponry was evolving."

The Illinois National Guard has several units whose lineage dates back to the Civil War including the 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment of Marion, West Frankfort, Effingham, Litchfield and Salem; the 1544th Transportation Company of Paris and the 444th Chemical Company of Galesburg.

Abraham Lincoln, a veteran of the Black Hawk War, and Ulysses S. Grant were members of the Illinois militia, today's Illinois National Guard.

Whitlock said he hopes to plan a few events to mark the 150th anniversary of the war, including a visitation from an Abraham Lincoln impersonator. Additionally, the museum will be open to the public during its usual hours of 1 to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday.

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CIVIL WAR 150 3/3/3

"I hope that visitors will be interested, military and civilian, to come to the museum and visit our exhibits and learn about Illinois' contribution to the Civil War, more than 250,000 Soldiers, and hopefully learn something about our military past," said Whitlock.



**U.S. Army photo by Spc. Lisa Cope 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment/Lt. Col. Mark Whitlock of Springfield, director of the Illinois State Military Museum, reviews the Civil War display at the museum in Springfield. The museum features the military history of Illinois servicemembers and the service of the Illinois National Guard spanning as far back to colonial America to present.**



**U.S. Army photo by Spc. Lisa Cope 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment/Illinois State Military Museum features Civil War re-enactors part of the museum's living history program who dress the part and speak to visitors. Richard Schachtsiek of Springfield, (left) wears the traditional uniform of an enlisted Union Soldier. Don Ferricks of Athens (right) wears the garb of a Union officer.**

For high resolution photos, please contact the Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office at [ngilstaffpao@ng.army.mil](mailto:ngilstaffpao@ng.army.mil)

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